

Scrivener Alsop and the Friends' School and Workhouse

C. Brightwen Rowntree, B.A., headmaster of the Friends' School at Saffron Walden, Essex, has compiled an account of a steward of the School and Workhouse at Clerkenwell, London, drawn largely from official minute books of which there exist thirty volumes of minutes, dating from 1702, under the writer's care, and from the records of London and Colchester Monthly Meetings.

Scrivener Alsop was a linen draper at Colchester, Essex when he married Mary Carter in 1760.

In 1778 the office of Steward to the School became vacant by the resignation of Robert Letchworth and his wife. Alsop applied for the post with Benjamin Batt, Daniel Emson, John Arnold and Thomas Soundy and was appointed with "a Salary of £50 *p.* Annum and that they take no Perquisites whatsoever." The disposition of the children was that Ann and Robert, the two youngest children, should be admitted without expense and his son Othniel to be paid for by him as "a Country Child," the last named being still a member of Colchester Meeting and outside the privileges of London membership; but soon afterwards, Peel Monthly Meeting, within the verge of which the School was situated, agreed to pay the fee for Othniel and he was admitted without expense to his father.

Scrivener Alsop died in January, 1783, and the post was again declared vacant. None of the previous applicants appear to have tried again—Josiah Collier and his wife being the appointees.

Mary Alsop was left in poor circumstances, owing to the payment of debts made before leaving Colchester, and to assist her she received one year's salary from the Six Weeks Meeting, the Finance Committee of London Friends.

It was agreed "to let Othniel Alsop go out on liking¹ as an apprentice to Wm. Hayhurst, Stay Maker, Newman Street, Oxford Street". Robert, the youngest son, was admitted to the School free and was later apprenticed to a Friend who was a brush manufacturer in Birmingham.

In 1793 Ruhamah John (1765-), the eldest son and Othniel (1770-1836), went to America. The youngest son, Robert (1777-1850) was the grandfather of the Robert Alsop (1803-1876) who married Christine Majolier.

¹ "It was the custom of the School Committee to send boys out as apprentices, on *trial* for a month. If the master *liked* the look of the lad, articles were signed at the end of the trial month." (C.B.R.)